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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, January 12, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Laundry Secrets." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering."

--ooOoo--

"Are you feeling well enough to listen to a long, sad story this morning, Aunt Sammy?" inquired my little friend, the bride. "I've decided that if I could only tell it to some sympathetic person I might feel better. It is a story with a splendid beginning but a very sad ending. Disaster overtook the heroine, though she had the best intentions in the world, and the hero started out well but almost had a temper tantrum in the end."

"Dear me. Is this a true story?" I asked.

"All too true, Aunt Sammy. I am the unfortunate heroine and the hero is my usually perfect husband."

"When did all this happen?"

"Last week on Monday, exactly a week ago today. I might add that our home life has not been the same since the event."

"And the cause?"

"Home laundering done by me."

A surprising thing to cause such a calamity, I suggested.

"You never can tell, Aunt Sammy. A few months of married life have taught me that you never can tell what is likely to happen the next minute. I made a splendid resolve early last Monday morning. I resolved to help out the family pocketbook and do my own laundry. Who would have guessed that such a worthwhile plan could have such disastrous results? Before last Monday I had supposed that muscle, soap and hot water were the only things necessary for doing the family laundry. So I got up bright and early, carried the clothes bag downstairs to the laundry, and said to myself, as I ran the hot water in the tub, 'My husband will be a very pleased man when he learns that I have done the washing this week all by myself and saved what we usually pay to the laundry.'

"Do you know how all those good intentions turned out, Aunt Sammy? (The sad part of my story begins at this point.) I spent all day on that job and, as a result of working with all my might, Tom's best wool socks shrunk until they were too small for him to wear, the bleach I used made holes in my silk underwear, and my best yellow smock became a dingy white. As for my towels -- my handsome monogrammed towels, that were once the pride of my hope chest -- they came out all streaked with bluing."

"Tell me truthfully, Aunt Sammy, did you ever know of another wife who had such bad luck as I? Other women do their own washings every week and never seem to have a bit of trouble."

Luck, it seemed to me, had nothing to do with that story. Washing, like every other household job, is an art and requires knowledge and practical experience for success. I asked my little friend if she intended to have another try at the family washing.

"Tom threatens to leave home if I do, but I don't like to be beaten by any household job. Isn't there a book or bulletin about the family washing that I could read before I tried again?"

"Indeed there is. I suggest that efficient looking bulletin called 'Methods and Equipment for Home Laundering.'"

"I'll send for it, Aunt Sammy, and read it from cover to cover before I wash another pair of socks or try to whiten monogrammed towels. But before it arrives, couldn't you give me a few suggestions here and there about laundering? Take those socks, for example. Why do you suppose they got so small?"

"I suppose they were treated unkindly. Wool is a sensitive kind of material. Heat, changes in temperature, alkali in the soap and rubbing, all affect it badly. Shrinkage is caused by intense heat and also by marked changes in temperature, making it necessary that all water used be lukewarm. Next time you wash woollen socks, remember lukewarm water, mild suds, removing the dirt by squeezing -- never rubbing -- and drying in a warm but not hot place."

"And my yellow smock, Aunt Sammy. What could have caused that to fade?"

"There are four good reasons why dyes sometimes run during laundering -- hot water, strong soap, slow handling and incorrect ways of drying. To prevent this loss of color, use lukewarm suds, wash and rinse quickly, remove all excess moisture by wrapping in soft towels and then wringing, and finally dry rapidly. Of course some dyes are not fast and would run anyway. Before purchasing material, it is always safest to test the color by washing a sample. New fabrics sometimes run a great deal in the first washing but this may be simply excess dye. If the water is much colored when the sample is first washed, repeat the process; on the second washing the material may not run at all."

Now let's leave our laundry problems and talk about the dinner for today. How would you like a warm spicy meal for this chilly weather? How would you like stuffed peppers for the main dish? All right. The Menu Specialist planned just such a dinner for us today, and if your pencils are sharpened and your notebooks ready, I'll give it to you.

Stuffed Baked Peppers; Creamed Celery; Mashed Potatoes with Brown Crust; and Gingerbread, served either with or without whipped cream.

The Stuffed Baked Peppers are described on page 20 of the Radio Recipe Book. If you have some meat left over from another meal, this is a very nice way to use it up. Just chop it up in the meat grinder, add it to the bread crumbs and use it to fill the pepper shells. Creamed Celery is also in the book. Look at the bottom of page 16.

A new way to serve the mashed potatoes to your family is with a brown crust. Just before the peppers are done, beat the mashed potatoes, pile them in a baking dish and put them in the oven until a nice brown crust forms on top. Serve them piping hot from the oven.

Perhaps I don't need to suggest again that there is an excellent recipe for gingerbread on page 72 of your Radio Cookbook. If you have some sour milk on hand it can be substituted for sweet milk in this recipe. The directions for using sour milk are given in the second paragraph.

Tomorrow: "Winter Salads."

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